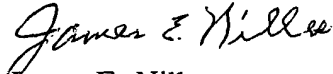


Preliminary Amendment - Monique Thual et al.
A Method for Collective Production of Microlenses...
Attorney Docket 136.166
Page 2

Entry of the amendments and early consideration and allowance are respectfully
requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Version With Markings to Show Changes Made

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method for the collective production of microlenses at the end of a set of aligned optical fibres, characterised in that it comprises a step of heating the end face of the end of all the fibres [(F)] by means of an electric arc [(A)], the end face of the ends of the fibres being situated on this side of a line [(X)] of the hottest points of the electric arc and at a distance d from this line in order to round all the fibre ends homogeneously and simultaneously to obtain all the microlenses.

2. A method for the collective production of microlenses according to Claim 1, characterised in that the distance [(d)] between the front face of the ends of the optical fibres and the line [(X)] of the hottest points is between 850 micrometres and 950 micrometres.

3. A method for the collective production of microlenses according to Claim 1 [or 2], characterised in that the set of optical fibres consists of a ribbon [(10)].

4. A method for the collective production of microlenses according to Claim 3, characterised in that the ribbon comprises monomode fibres [(MO)] whose terminations comprise a length of silica [(SI)] welded to a length of fibre with an index gradient [(GRAD)], the microlenses [(L1, Ln)] being produced at the end of the lengths of fibres with an index gradient [(GRAD)].

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